

REMARKS

Claims 2-4 and 6-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2 and 15 are amended. No new matter is added. Claim 5 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowability regarding claims 16 and 17.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representative by Examiner Fleming in the March 14, 2008 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 2-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,601,307 to Heyring et al. (corresponding to WO 95/11813) (hereinafter "Heyring"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 2 and 15 recite, among other features, a ground contact load control apparatus for a vehicle comprising front and rear, left and right load bearing means having damping means and elastic means provided between ground contact load control hydraulic cylinders and an actuator. The desirability of these features is described in Applicant's disclosure at least on page 4, lines 11-17 and page 17, lines 10-17 of the specification. As the Examiner agreed during the personal interview, Heyring cannot reasonably be interpreted as teaching, or having suggested, all of the features positively recited in independent claims 2 and 15.

Heyring teaches a suspension system for a vehicle that includes double acting rams (13, 14, 17, 18) having upper and lower chambers, as shown in Fig. 1. The rams are interconnected with conduits (8, 8a, 10, 10a) that place the upper and lower chambers of each pair of diagonally opposite rams in fluid communication. As shown in Fig. 2, the conduits

are independently in communication with a load distribution unit 40, and in particular, each conduit is in communication with a respective one of variable volume chambers (55-58), the volume of each of which varies in response to the movement of a centrally-located piston rod 51. The load distribution unit 40 acts to balance pressure in the double acting rams and achieve uniform load distribution between the vehicle wheels.

Heyring discloses an alternate embodiment, shown in Fig. 4 and described at col. 12, lines 3-37, that includes a load distribution unit 140 comprising a pair of pistons 128 that each distribute a load between respective outer chambers 160 and rear chambers 132, 133. The load distribution unit 140 comprises a center chamber 162 having a set pressure that can be adjusted by a pressure regulator to control the load distribution 140 in combination with the pair of pistons 128 to compensate for changes in the load of a vehicle.

As the Examiner agreed during the personal interview, Heyring fails to teach, or to have suggested, a ground contact load control apparatus for a vehicle comprising front and rear, left and right load bearing means having damping means and elastic means provided between ground contact load control hydraulic cylinders and an actuator, as positively recited in independent claims 2 and 15. Further, claims 3, 4 and 6-14 are also not taught by Heyring for at least the respective dependence of each of these claims on allowable base claim 2, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-4 and 6-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Heyring are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-4 and 6-15, in addition to the indicated allowable subject matter of claims 16 and 17 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 17, 2008

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